

[Associated Press report](#)

A commission created to provide jobs and boost the economy in the northern reaches of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York is receiving \$1.5 million under a measure signed into law by President Barack Obama.

The funding for the Northern Border Regional Commission is the first awarded to the fledgling panel, created in 2007. The amount was part of an appropriations package Obama signed Wednesday.

The commission is based on other federal-state partnerships formed throughout the country, such as the Appalachian Regional Commission created in 1965, the Denali Commission in Alaska in 1998 and the Delta Regional Authority in 2000. Other newly formed commissions are in the Southeast, Southwest and Northern Great Plains.

The funding for the Northern Border Regional Commission will support grants to create jobs in a 36-county area by investing in a number of critical areas including infrastructure improvements, high-speed Internet access, health care and renewable energy production.

"I am grateful that the initial funding will soon reach our communities," said Rep. Paul Hodes, D-N.H., who introduced the bill to create the commission.

Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., who also lobbied for the commission, called the funding "a major step toward revitalizing local economies in northern New England and New York."

Earlier this year, the governors from the four states sought \$30 million from the federal government for the commission, requesting the investment to support sustainable forestry, economic development and land conservation in the northern forest region of their states.

Each commission is made up of a federal co-chair, appointed by the president, and representatives from each state. Hodes has asked Obama for the appointment.